Nixon in shock;

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LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Former President Richard M. Nixon was in critical condition Tuesday night and under the care of special nurses after going into shock for three hours following surgery for phlebitis.

President Ford said he was praying for Nixon's recovery, and the former president's wife and two daughters were staying near Nixon's bedside.

Dr. Eldon Hickman, who performed Nixon's surgery which had been described as successful during the day, planned to stay with Nixon through the night.

Nixon's doctors sidestepped questions about when he might be well enough to travel to Washington, D.C., to testify at the Watergate cover-up trial of five former political associates.

He has been subpoenaed by both the defense and prosection.

Hickman described Nixon's surgery as "uneventful."

condition critical

In the relatively simple operation, often performed on phlebitis patients, the small clip was inserted in the left groin area to partially close off the main vein taking blood from the leg to the upper body.

The clip permits blood to pass but not dangerously large clots.

After such surgery most patients experience some temporary swelling of the leg, and an elastic support stocking may be needed for a time.

During surgery, Secret Service agents guarded the operating room.

Surgery was decided Monday night after doctors discovered a large clot in Nixon's thigh Monday night. They feared it could break loose and travel to the heart or lungs, lodging there and causing death or severe damage.

Lungren told a brief news conference after the surgery at Memorial Hospital

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Medical Center that the clots hopefully will be absorbed by the body in time.

Nixon will continue to receive anticoagulant drugs to combat the phlebitis, a vein inflammation, and will be examined periodically to insure there are no complications, a hospital spokesman said.

Hickman said Nixon, 61, probably will be hospitalized for another week and that convalescence at Nixon's San Clemente home would take four to six weeks.

The former president's operation began at 5:30 a.m. None of his family was present at the hospital, but later Nixon aides said the former president's wife, Pat, and his former White House secretary, Rose Mary Woods, had arrived to see Nixon.

Lungren said there was no excessive bleeding during the operation. He had worried that bleeding might be a problem during surgery because of anticoagulation therapy Nixon had been receiving to keep his blood from clotting.